

Town of Ashford

Established 1714

**Ralph H. Fletcher
First Selectman**

26 September 2011

The Access Agency
1315 Main Street
Willimantic, CT 06226

To Whom It May Concern:

In response to your request for testimony pertaining to a possible cut in LIHEAP funding, I cannot begin to describe how important the benefits of this program have been to the residents of the Town of Ashford.

With a low/moderate income population comprising 34% of Ashford's households, the Access Agency, through our Social Services Department has been able to provide 116 of those households with energy assistance during the 2010-2011 energy season. A cut in the energy funding funneled through the towns would create a severe hardship to the recipients of this assistance.

In its infinite wisdom, the State of Connecticut (custodian of federal energy assistance funding) has determined that residents utilizing electric heat are ineligible for the energy assistance program. Ashford is in the unique situation of having seven apartment complexes utilizing electric heat. These complexes house many elderly and young families who fall under HUD's low/moderate income guidelines that make them eligible for energy assistance.

Our concern for these residents is that they will have to choose between paying the electric bill and putting food on the table. Which would you choose? We urge you to encourage the federal government to maintain, if not increase, its current energy assistance funding level and we strongly encourage you to recommend alteration of Connecticut's eligibility guidelines for energy assistance recipients.

Sincerely yours,

Ralph H. Fletcher

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